

# G O D ' S

Strange and terrible Judgment

I N

## Oxford-shire:

Being a true

## R E L A T I O N

How a Woman at *Atherbury*,

Having used divers horrid Wishes and Imprecations,

Was suddenly Burn'd to Ashes

all on one side of her Body, when there

was no Fire neer her; the other part

of her remaining untouch'd, and

not so much as Sindg'd.

The like heavy and visible Judgement from  
Heaven having scarce been known or heard of in  
any Age.

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*For our God is a consuming fire.*

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Licensed May the 10. 1677. Ro. L'Estrange.

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The like heavy and visible in the  
Heaven having been known to be of in  
any Age

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A true and wonderful Account how a  
Woman was found half burnt without  
any fire neer her, &c.

**B**ecause Judgment is not executed speedily  
(saith Holy Writ) therefore are the wic-  
ked hardened in their impieties. If we  
consider the horrid Oaths, the abomi-  
nable Curses and Imprecations dayly  
practised and used in this sinful Age, we might  
justly expect that the Earth should open to swal-  
low such Miscreants alive to the pit of Hell; or  
the Heavens dart down Thunder-bolts on their  
guilty heads: *But there is mercy with our God, that  
he may be feared*: He waits upon rebellious Mor-  
tals to be gracious, having sworn that he delights  
not in the death of a sinner, but rather that he  
return, repent, and live: Yet will he not always  
suffer his holy Spirit to be grieved with a froward  
and obstinate Generation, but sometimes, for ma-  
nifestation and glory of his Justice, takes sudden  
Vengeance (even in this life) on notorious Trans-  
gressors of his holy Laws, and such as may make

every ear to tingle, and heart to ake, that hears or considers it: For this is certain, though Divine Vengeance may seem to have *leaden feet*, yet it hath *iron bands*: Though Heaven strikes *slowly*, it smites *surely*, and bruiseeth every stubborn Soul that stands out against it in rebellion, to powder, or everlasting destruction.

Not to amuse the Reader (who we hope is a better experienced Christian than to need it) with a tedious Preamble to demonstrate this apparent Truth, or quote (as we might do) various Histories from worthy and credible Authors; as *The Theatre of God's Judgments*; *Clarks Examples*, &c. to parallel it; We shall only impartially relate what within very few days happened in our own Nation; and which is not only most notorious in all the neighbouring Countries, but also ready to be testified by divers sober persons of unblemish'd Credit in this City for an undoubted Truth, too certain to be denied by any but an Infidel, too remarkable to be slighted by any but an Atheist.

We could tell you the Persons Name and Abode which is the unhappy Subject of this Relation, but that our business is to make a Report of the Judgement, without blasting the Person to whom God in his mercy may yet have granted the grace of a timely Repentance, for ought that is known to us: So that since it hath pleased Providence to take her out of the Land of the Living, we shall pay that respect to the charitable Proverb, which adviseth, *Not to speak ill of the dead*, as

not

not to blazon her Vices or Infirmities further than is necessary to the declaration of Truth, and cautioning of others surviving; the main and intended only end of this Publication.

This unhappy Woman, then, keeping a small Ale-house, had too much addicted herself to lowd Speeches, sometimes Oaths, and frequently Curses, as well on herself as others: It hapned some few days since, being all alone in her House, a woman, one of her Neighbours, came thither for some strong Drink she had occasion for; which she having drawn, and received Twelve Pence, or some such piece of Money, instead of justly returning the full Change, stopt and abated two pence or three pence out of it, besides what the present Drink came to, pretending there was so much formerly due and owing to her. Which the other resolutely denying, the Hostess began to Swear, and use several profane and abominable Wishes and Imprecations, saying, *God damn me, and the Devil burn me if it be not so:* which last words she often repeated. However, the other, confident perhaps in the certainty of her knowledge to the contrary, still persisting to deny it, and refusing to be gone without the rest of her Money; The Ale-wife at last violently thrust her out of her house; and to prevent her coming in again, shut the Door, and lockt it against her.

Thus with many horrid sinful expressions (if not downright perjuries) this poor Wretch made shift to wrangle her Neighbour out of this petty inconsiderable

considerable sum, but is like to pay lamentable dear for the same. For, behold! by a stupendious and terrible Judgment from Heaven, as we cannot but suppose, she was immediately called to an account, and burnt to Death, as she had foolishly and wickedly wisht, in a wonderful and unheard-of manner: For having so shut and lockt the door, the same was not opened, nor any further news heard of her, till several hours after, her Husband chanc'd to come home, and wondering to finde his Door fast shut, in the middle of the day, without being able to make any body answer within, enquired amongst his Neighbours, if they saw his Wife go forth? Which they all denied; adding, that they rather believed, having wearied herself with scolding and railing at *Goody such an one*, she was fallen asleep; whereupon the man at last forc'd open the door, with one or two of his Neighbours: which was no sooner done, but their Eyes encountred one of the most sad and dismal Spectacles that ever Mortal beheld; For in the midst of the floor lay the Reliques of his Wife, one Side of her Body and the Cloaths thereupon, from the Soal of her Foot to the Crown of the Head being consumed and burnt to Ashes, and nothing left but the Skeleton, or part of the Bones; whereas the other Side remained whole, and the Cloaths thereon not so much as toucht or sing'd; though it was observed, that the Flesh and Skin there was all turn'd black, as if it had been blasted with Lightuing.



I need not stand to relate how affrighted and amazed her Hu band and Friends were to behold this ghastly sight, especially for that they could no where heer her see the least spark or symptome of Fire, and were well assured that there had not been any at all in the house all that day. Their consternation indeed was inexpressible, and therefore I shall not vainly attempt to shadow it forth in words; nor any further descend on this strange and astonishing procedure of Providence, Iave onely to recommend it to the serlous consideration of all those that have been, or may be guilty of such Crying Provocations. How knowest thou, oh thou wretched sinner, when thou art impudently blaspheming Heaven, and at every other word in thy drunken Frolicks, or hair-brain'd Passion, *calling upon God*, but not to have mercy on thee, or pardon thee, *but to damn thee*, wishing (as if thou wouldst dare Omnipotent Justice) that he would *confound, sink, rot thee*, or the like detestable Expressions; how art thou assured, I say, that whilst thou art thus ranting, and treasuring up so fast *wrath against the day of wrath* (as the Apostle speaks) God will permit that roaring Lion that goes about seeking whom he may devour, to tear thee in pieces, or hurry thee quick into the Eternal Flames? Can you, dare you pretend your selves Christians, and live in the practice of such, worse than heathenish Blasphemies? Know you not that there is a sure and dreadful account to be given for every *idle word*? and oh, then, what will you in that day

dey be able to say in excuse of these black and  
 frightful Imprecations? If the *Righteous scarcely*  
*be saved, where shall the wicked and ungodly*  
 (such profligate Sinners, Swearers, Cursers, Bla-  
 phemers, and Atheists) *appear?* Destruction and  
 Bitterness shall be their latter end, yelping and  
 gnashing of teeth their employment, tormenting  
 Devils their Companions, and Fire and Brimstone,  
 Pain and Anguish, Rage, Despair, and horrible  
 Darkaess their portion, and that (Oh that they  
 would consider it before it be to late too prevent  
 it) to all Eternity.

**F I N I S.**

